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SUBJECT: H1N1 UPDATE: 8,619 CONFIRMED CASES

REF: A) Berlin 937, B) Berlin 925 and previous.

¶1. (U) SUMMARY: The number of H1N1 infections in Germany rose within the last two days by 1442 to a total of 8,619 on August 6. The majority of new infections occurred abroad. School began in several federal states despite an increase in H1N1 cases. Berlin's preparations for the World Championships in Athletics include increased precautionary measures at Schoenefeld airport. END SUMMARY.

¶2. (U) On August 5, the National Reference Center for Influenza at the Robert Koch Institute (RKI) confirmed 786 new (laboratory and non-laboratory) confirmed cases of H1N1, increasing the total number of H1N1 cases to 7,963. On August 6, RKI confirmed an additional 656 people to be infected with the new virus bringing the total number of confirmed H1N1 cases in Germany to 8,619. Within the two days, new cases were distributed among the federal states as follow: North Rhine-Westphalia (484), Lower-Saxony (295), Baden-Wuerttemberg (179), Bavaria (167), Hesse (76), Schleswig-Holstein (38), Hamburg (33), Saarland (31), Rhineland-Palatinate Berlin (29), (28), Saxony-Anhalt (19), Thuringia (19), Brandenburg (18), Mecklenburg-Vorpommern (16), Saxony (6) and Bremen (4).

¶3. (U) According to RKI, the increase in the number of infections is mainly due to people returning from travel abroad (1098 new cases). Newly confirmed cases include laboratory-confirmed cases of H1N1 as well as non-laboratory-confirmed cases, mainly from people who displayed symptoms after being in contact with a patient who previously tested positive. So far, all cases are reportedly mild.

¶4. (U) North Rhine-Westphalia (NRW) remains the German state with the highest number of cases with a total of 3,266, followed by Lower-Saxony (1601) and Baden-Wuerttemberg (858 cases). Less than 22 percent (1,859) of all confirmed infections in Germany have resulted from domestic transmission.

¶5. (U) Media reports indicate that the Federal Cabinet will decide August 12 who receive the flu vaccination first. According to the current draft ordinance, people likely to be immunized first those who could get in contact with infected

people such as firefighters, police officers and medical personal as well as high-risk groups such as people with existing health problems. However, questions remain as to whether or not statutory health care agencies will cover the full cost for the immunization. The German Health Ministry's July announcement that the shot will be free; this has led to a dispute with the statutory health care agencies.

¶6. (U) The new school year began today in Bremen, Lower-Saxony, Saxony-Anhalt and Thuringia. Media reports indicate that information brochures have been distributed to provide inform about the flu and the precautionary measure that should be considered to prevent its further spread. The federal states of Hesse and Baden-Wuerttemberg are considering extending the summer break due to the new virus. Schools in Hesse will officially start on August 24 while in Baden-Wuerttemberg students will go back to school mid- September. NRW announced it will decide mid next week whether to extend the summer break.

Berlin prepares for World Championships in Athletics/Airport gets quarantine station

¶7. (U) Berlin's Schoenefeld Airport has established a quarantine station for suspected flu patients as part of its preparations for the August 15-23 World Championships in Athletics in Berlin. Airport spokesman Ralf Kunkel said Schoenefeld expects an increase in international passengers for the event, with some travelers likely to carry the new virus or other diseases. The airport quarantine station can

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accommodate up to 250 people and cost 100,000 Euro. Media reports indicate that athletes with flu-like symptoms will most likely be put under quarantine at their hotel until test results become available. There has been no similar announcement regarding quarantine measures at Berlin's main airport, Tegel. To date, Berlin has a total of 217 confirmed flu virus cases.

BRADTKE